

**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Tiverton Conservation Commission**  
**Tuesday, April 18, 2007 at 7:00 PM**  
**Town Hall, 343 Highland Road, Tiverton**

**Members Present:** T. Ramotowski (chair), S. Hardy, P. Boldoc, R. Elder, A. Cruickshank

**I. Public Delegation:** D. Merriman **Guest:** G. Steckman

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

The following corrections to the minutes of the meeting of March 21, 2006:

Page 2: Old Business – Fogland beach – third paragraph: ‘...NRCS grant to remove bittersweet is still under consideration, because...’

**III. Treasurer’s Report:** Since the treasurer was absent, there was no report although no known changes have taken place since the last meeting.  
G. Steckman noted that the Commission’s budget request was cut to \$1500 from \$2000.

**IV. Brief Announcements:**

A. T. Ramotowski mentioned several events that are to take place over the next month including:

1. Earth Day (April 22<sup>nd</sup>) cleanup at 10:00 AM and meeting at the junction of Rt. 24 and Fish Road.
2. Arbor Day, April 28, will have a tree planting at the Tiverton Middle School at 10:00 AM in combination with a talk by Martin VanHof.
3. “Walk the Track”: a walk to show and promote the proposed pedestrian/bike path being considered for the old New England railroad track. Meeting at the Sakonnet Boat House restaurant at 10:00 AM on June 30<sup>th</sup>.
4. The Tiverton Garden Club cleanup week – April 22 through April 30. Signups at Essex Library, Town Hall and Coastal Roasters with trash bags obtainable at Essex Library.

B. S. Hardy noted that two letters were sent to the Town Building official making him aware of signage violations. One at the Dunkin Donuts (Stafford Rd.) and the other at the Getty station.

**V. Old Business**

**A. Stormwater II:**

T. Ramotowski discussed the idea of contacting the “Scout” leader in town to suggest the possibility a project for one or more scouts to pinpoint the locations of stormwater outflows belonging to the Town via GPS technology. This information is needed to satisfy a State requirement for GPS mapping of the outflow locations. G. Steckman expressed concern about using an untrained person and will be looking into an engineering student doing it as a project.

**B. Draft Ordinances:**

No developments have taken place with these ordinances and they remain with the Council pending further consideration.

At this point a proposed variance by Evelyn's Drive-in was discussed. The variance was for periodic outdoor entertainment. G. Steckman indicated that they had been asked to make a complete plan and present it to the Council. G. Steckman also indicated that there had been further discussions with Evelyn's relative to cleaning up the property, removing an old "junk" vehicle (school bus), updating the septic system and addressing neighbor's concerns.

#### **C. Wastewater Management:**

T. Ramotowski warned about the need to be vigilant in regard to new sewage treatment systems which allow development of previously un-buildable properties. He indicated that L. McGreavy will be alert for permit submissions. S. Hardy noted that some towns have "high water overlays" which give towns more authority over questionable building proposals. T. Ramotowski noted that there is still no progress on the cesspool/septic system inspection program; the proposed legislation is still pending in the State Legislature..

#### **D. Stafford Pond Issues:**

With P. Sullivan absent, there was no discussion other than the presentation of a letter to the Fire Districts (No. Tiverton and Stone Bridge) requesting donations for the Lloyd Center educational program in the Tiverton elementary schools. Also presented was a letter to the Town Council and the Town Administrator prepared by P. Sullivan expressing the need to be vigilant about Stafford Pond's water quality.

#### **E. Fogland Beach Issues:**

T. Ramotowski noted that he had not heard yet from CRMC regarding the grant to remove the Bittersweet.

T. Ramotowski also mentioned that guidelines have yet to be established for fees and commercial gatherings at the beach. G. Steckman stated that it is on the agenda to do an analysis of fees so that they can be appropriately raised. He stated that the goal is to have a cost based accounting of all departments including recreation. This will give a better assessment of what the actual costs to maintain Fogland are and, thus, a better idea of how the fees should be adjusted.

D. Merriman noted that Little Compton uses an independent form of accounting for their beaches making them a profit center.

D Merriman related an incident observed at Fogland\_earlier today where an individual was para-boarding on the beach road. The police were called and after talking with the individual left the area. The boarder then resumed his activity. When the police were called again, the comment was that there was no law preventing it. D. Merrinam felt that it is a dangerous activity and should not be allowed.

G. Steckman stated that the Police Chief was at the Town Hall in a meeting at the time and, thus, could not rule on the issue at the time. Mr. Steckman will discuss it with him.

#### **F. Tree Committee:**

R. Elder indicated that there was nothing new to report.

#### **G. Landfill Issues:**

G. Steckman stated that the RFP for a 5 year waste disposal contract had been tabled due to the time shortage. No bidder would be able to gear up to fulfill the contract before the current contract expires. The current contractor, BFI, will be asked to

extend the current contract for a period of time allowing the RFP to be properly issued in a timely manner.

G. Steckman noted that he had been quoted \$5000 for each extra Saturday pickup and that that cost prevented more than a few such days.

**H. Litter Prevention:**

A letter to Starwoods from P. Sullivan was shown and discussed. The letter asked if Starwoods maintenance could be responsible for the clean-up and maintenance of the area directly across Main Road and abutting Souza Road from the Starwoods entrance which they own.

**I. Stone Bridge Waterfront Improvement:**

Nothing new to report. A meeting is scheduled for 4/20

**J. Status of Large Scale Retail Development:**

S. Hardy indicated that there is nothing new to report on either the NED proposal or the Hasenjeager property. However, a new law suit has been filed relative to the Industrial Park. Discussions are in progress.

S. Hardy mentioned that there is progress being made on updating the Comprehensive Plan and that, once complete, it will trigger a review of both the Town Zoning and the Town Subdivision regulations.

G. Steckman noted that the Town Planner position is still in the budget and that when that person is hired, he/she will report directly to the Town Administrator. As it currently stands, however, the position may not be able to be filled until late fall or early winter due to budgetary constraints. The position will specifically call for a Certified Planner as opposed to someone without certification.

**K. Alterations of Wetlands:**

L. McGreavy sent along an update of the current applications for DEM variances. A discussion of the Souza/Main Road property ensued with the conclusion that the latest resubmission had been accepted by DEM. TCC needs to be more vigilant in finding out about these applications when they are first filed, so that timely responses/comments can be sent to RI-DEM. We also need to be more consistent in how we monitor the status of pending applications.

S. Hardy researched other towns that have conservation involvement, one of which was Narragansett. That town had exercised the right to deny permits. Under State law towns may have stricter laws than the state when it comes to approval/disapproval of building and variance permits (Town may overrule the State). Permits actually require approval by both the town and by DEM. It is apparent that someone on TCC needs to be checking the DEM permit submissions every one to two weeks.

T. Ramotowski noted that, if the TCC is to actively participate in the approval/denial process, rules and regulations will have to be developed in order to act in a fair and above board manner.

**L. North Tiverton contaminated soil:**

T. Ramotowski noted that the town had filed a petition to have the sale of the property halted in order to force the cleanup of the area.

It was also noted that ENACT will hold a walk-a-thon on April 28<sup>th</sup> to raise funds and draw further attention to the issue.

G. Steckman commented that there will be a meeting with the Town Council, DEM and ENACT next Tuesday, the 25<sup>th</sup> of April to discuss the status of the situation and to discuss further steps.

**M. Private Well Water Protection Workshop:**

T. Ramotowski announced that, in speaking with URI, a workshop is being scheduled for Tiverton sometime in September – exact date to be announced. This workshop will be open to the public to learn how to protect their well water from contamination and what and how to check for pollutants and other contaminants.

**N. Status of Weaver's Cove LNG terminal:**

There was nothing new to report.

**O. Sources of Power – National Grid:**

There was nothing new to report.

**P. Harbor Management and Light Rail:**

Nothing new to report. R. Elder suggested that this item be removed from future agendas. All agreed.

**Q. Monitoring Condition of Dams in Tiverton:**

T. Ramotowski discussed the concern by the State regarding the condition of dams throughout the state and the recognition that there were too many dams to be properly monitored by one state official. This brought up the possibility that each town would be responsible for monitoring its own dams. According to the State's report, there are only 3 dams in Tiverton and that none of them pose a significant threat if breached or damaged (this is, however, only anecdotal assumptions by Commission members).

**VI. New Business:**

Only one item of new business was brought up by T. Ramotowski regarding the advisability of the Conservation Commission becoming the “Environmental Advocate” for the Town. A list of powers and duties was circulated. Comment was requested. A. Cruickshank stated that he believed the duties and responsibilities are beyond the scope of the Commission’s abilities and that we should not try to assume that role. S. Hardy, P. Boldoc and R. Elder indicated their agreement and a decision was made to table this item for possible future discussion.

**VII. Adjournment was at 9:15 PM**

Minutes recorded by A. Cruickshank